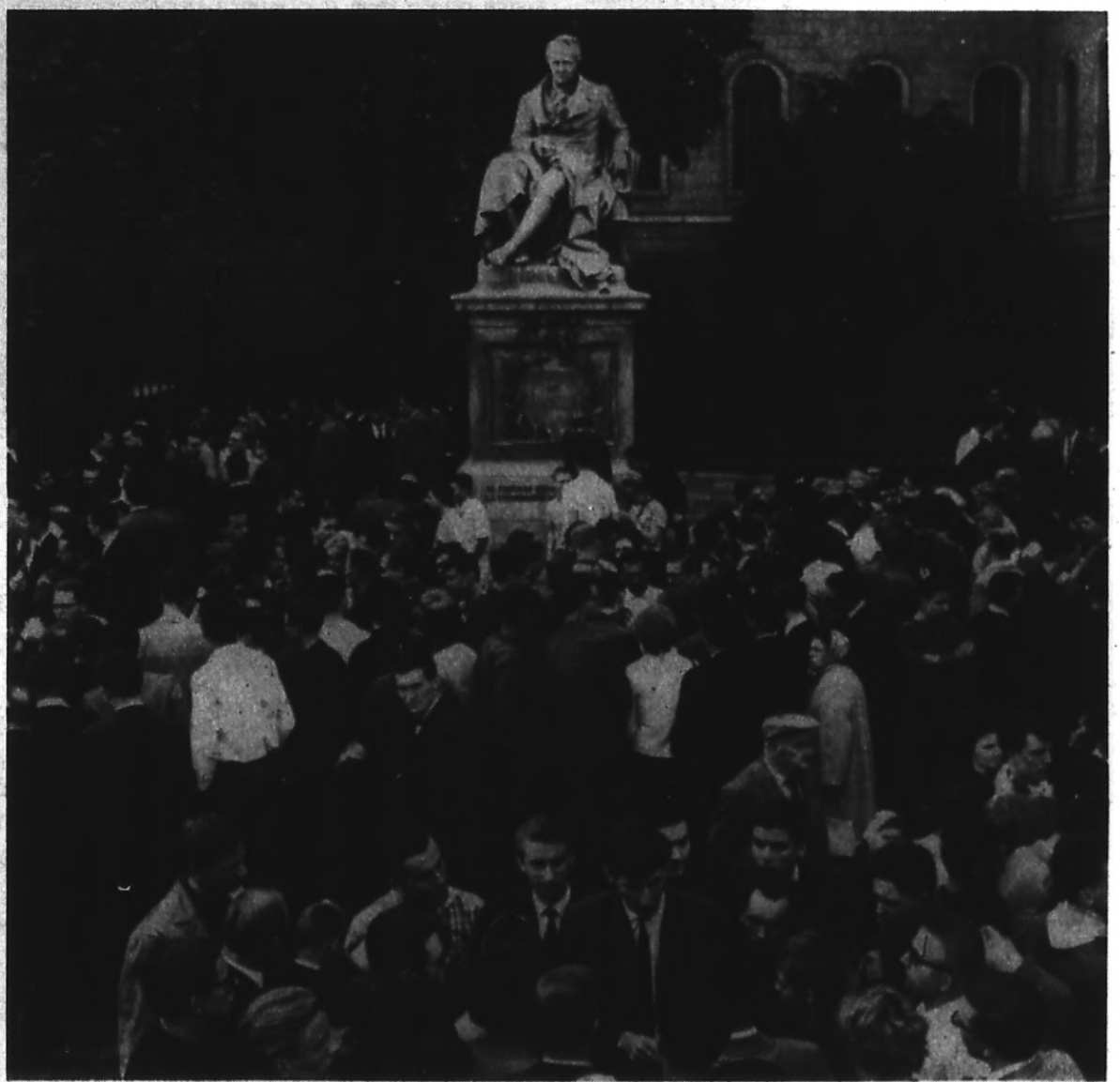
REC'D JUN 25 1964

DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

Vol. XIII No. 11 | May 29th 1964 | Price: 15 Pf, 5c, 3d.

HYDE PARK IN E. BERLIN



Thousands of young Germans from both German states met in East Berlin over the Whitsun holidays to dance, play — and to talk. One of the most striking features of the weekend rally was the "Hyde Park" atmosphere in the central streets, where groups of young people discussed and argued about everything from peace to school problems. Our photograph shows one tiny sector of this all-German discussion, in front of the Humboldt University on Unter den Linden in East Berlin.

Half Million Demonstrate for Sense and Progress

More than half a million young people, the majority from the German Democratic Republic, came together in East Berlin over the Whitsun weekend to enjoy themselves, to demonstrate for a sensible and realistic solution of the German problem, and to show the part the young generation play in building socialism in the GDR.

Opening the rally, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, gave the keynote when he put the question: "Should those responsible in both German states negotiate with each other?". The answer given by the vast audience was a great shout of "Yes". Ulbricht suggested that valuable first steps could be an arms freeze in both German states, and, in the youth field, the establishment of a joint commission composed of young parliamentarians from both German states.

"We have to face the fact that there are today two states in Germany with differing social systems. There is only one possible policy, and that is the policy of peaceful coexistence, of living in peace with each other. Germany will only have a good name in the world when it becomes known for its peace policy, for its scientific achievements, and for its culture. This is the only path which will lead to a happy future for the young people in the whole of Germany," Walter Ulbricht stated.

The Whitsun Rally was attended by about 520,000 young people from the German Democratic Republic, and some 25,000 from West Germany. A number of West German youth organisations, ranging from trade union youth groups to YMCAs, which had originally planned to attend were dissuaded by massive West German Government pressure.

Apart from a big demonstration on Whitsunday, at which the young people of the German Democratic Republic showed examples of the fine work they were doing in all fields, the main features of the weekend festival were well over one thousand "shows" ranging from open-air concerts to hundreds of dances and sing-songs, and a full programme of sports events.

Previous youth rallies in East Berlin at Whitsun, in 1950 and 1954, were marked by massive attempts from West Berlin to cause unrest, incidents and riots. The 1964 rally passed off without any incidents.

HYDE PARK IN EAST BERLIN

By the Editor

One of the most interesting features of the big Whitsun Rally in East Berlin was an unplanned feature: the discussion groups which sprang up all over the city, which gave the central avenues like the Unter den Linden and Karl Marx Allee the look of a vast Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park, but without the Bible punchers. One small section of such discussion groups is shown in our front-page picture. At one point, at least 20,000 young people from West Germany and the GDR were arguing the toss in such groups.

It is, of course, extraordinarily difficult to sum up a lively public discussion, which spread for miles and went on far into the night on all three days of the Whitsun weekend, but after listening for hours and comparing notes with others, both from east and west, it is possible to draw a few possibly superficial conclusions.

Broadly speaking, the West German participants could be classified in two groups. There were, first of all, the ordinary young people from West Germany who had come to the rally to find out for themselves "what goes on behind the Iron Curtain". They asked questions about all sorts of subjects, ranging from educational opportunities to the cost of living, and they generally quickly found some GDR boy or girl who could give them the answers, and faded away to continue the discussion more privately over a coffee, a glass of beer or on the dance floor. The second group was made up of young people, largely West German university students, who had come with the set intention of opening the eyes of the GDR youth to their alleged misery and oppression. Some of these had come on their own initiative, while others had been organised, particularly by the West Berlin authorities, and given a quick course as "free world agitators".

After listening to the discussions for a while it became fairly easy to spot the "trained agitators", for they kept on trotting out the same data on when, where, and how "the Russians", and "the Communists" had brought about the partitioning of Germany, and the whole complicated situation in which Germany finds itself today.

The GDR partners in these arguments, which sometimes grew heated, but as far as I could see rarely rude, were ordinary young people, from factories, farms, universities and schools, and in a few cases they were floored by well prepared and well presented western arguments about errors and omissions in the past. But on the whole, the course of the arguments was a tribute to the educational system of the GDR; after listening to many dozens of discussions on fairly abstruse points about currency reform in 1948, remilitarisation, the Marshall Plan, and practically everything else that has happened in both parts of Germany since 1945, I came to the conclusion that, in the political field at least, the average GDR youngster simply knows more than his West German contemporary.

Time and again I saw self-satisfied West Germans, who had sailed into an argument fully confident that they knew all the debating points, shuffle their feet, hum and haw, and admit that they would have to look up this point or that, or that their facts did not seem to be right.

But it was when the discussions left the field of past history and came to the present and the future that the West German "agitators" became most uncomfortable. The GDR youngsters put it like this, in rough summary:

"Let us assume for the sake of argument, that both sides have made mistakes in the past. But look at the situation as it exists today. There are two different German states, whether you like it or not. What should be done? We in the GDR have no intension of invading West Germany; we hope you in West Germany have no intention of invading the GDR. If we rule out invasion, then the sensible thing is to coexist. The GDR has made dozens of suggestions for a realistic policy of arms freezing, demilitarisation and so on; we have suggested joint consultations on getting along together. What is the West German Government doing to respond; what are you doing to further a settlement?"

And the West German propagandists fell silent. They had no reply, they had nothing to offer. And many of them went back home looking puzzled; they had sallied out to undermine the German Democratic Republic, only to discover that their case was not so good as they had thought. They had discovered that the GDR was not waiting to be "liberated" by the West German Bundeswehr.

Yugoslavia and GDR Agree

The governments of Yugoslavia and the German Democratic Republic are in agreement on the main international questions and the way they should be tackled, Edvard Kardelj, Deputy Chairman of the Yugoslav Executive Council, stated on May 19th at the conclusion of a visit to the GDR. Edvard Kardelj, who headed a Yugoslav parliamentary delegation, called for closer cooperation between the two countries.

An agreement on the establishment of Yugoslav–GDR committees for economic and scientific cooperation was signed in Belgrade on May 15th.

WISE & WEIRD COMMENTS ON WHITSUN RALLY

"The most interesting feature of the weekend proved to be the chance discussions between young West and East Germans – little groups gathering at a street corner, in a cafe, or after a dance in East Berlin. Those talks overheard by your correspondent showed certain patterns. The East Germans often seemed better prepared with arguments, for instance, about a nuclear-free zone in central Europe, or about educational opportunities. For young people on both sides, it seems, pressure for human contacts and a tacit agreement to disagree on political issues, as exemplified by the Berlin Christmas passes arrangement, is growing markedly."

"The Times", London, May 18th

"Even in their freedom, in which they apparently believe, they (the GDR youth) are really shackled. Nothing could be sadder and more oppressive than their happiness."

West Berlin Senator Heinrich Albertz, May 18th

"All who came to the Festival did so voluntarily and with enthusiasm. They were offered a programme of entertainments which would be hard to equal in its variety."

"Bonner Rundschau", West Germany, May 19th

"The all-German discussion took place on the streets, from early in the morning until midnight. The Whitsun rally was characterised by these groups, which grew bigger and bigger, which did not disperse, and which were certainly not dispersed by anybody. West German youths who visited the rally said they had been most impressed by the fact that they could talk with people on the other side. At the mass demonstrations the enthusiasm was genuine, and genuine too was the devotion with which they (GDR youth in the discussion groups, ed.) defended their state and attacked the Federal Republic."

"Welt Der Arbeit" (West German TUC Weekly), May 22nd

"There were few people on the streets. There was scarcely a cheerful face to be seen, only depression."

"Kurier", West Berlin, May 19th

"In the evening, the dance bands struck up on the streets and squares, and the girls who had come from the provinces changed their clothes. The searchlights lit up scenes which I would rather have expected on Bastille Day in Paris; but they were boys from the GDR who were dancing here in blue jeans to very American music. But we should not regard these lads and lasses as potential resistance fighters against the GDR state. They danced twist, and had a good time, and applauded Walter Ulbricht, and kept on asking me questions about Seebohm, Globke, Strauss and Zech-Nenntwich."

"Spandauer Volksblatt" West Berlin, May 20th

"The streets along which the demonstration marched were empty. On long stretches there was nobody to be seen but police. The Whitsun Rally was marked by enthusiasm to order, mobs and riots."

"BZ", West Berlin, May 19th

"It is doubtful whether any of the young West Germans have been convinced in the course of these discussions, and there are unlikely to have been any 'conversions' of East Germans; but thousands of others stood around the discussion groups, and they heard from western mouths information and arguments which they did not know previously. The young West Germans have learned something too; first of all they have gained knowledge about realities in the 'GDR', and secondly they have learned something of the art of defending their standpoint against hard opponents. All this will have a lasting effect, as the echo of a broad discussion beween people in the two German states such as has not been heard for many years. There is no reason to regret this fact."

"Westdeutsche Allgemeine", May 19th

"They talked about politics, about the events of the past and the present, and they said what they thought. 'It was excellent', a communist veteran said, 'our meetings have not been so lively for years'. A West German visitor, who felt he had been defeated in argument, said: 'I wish I had studied up on facts better in advance'."

Associated Press (German service), May 18th

An American View of Germany

In the April issue of "Encounter" magazine, published in London, American political commentator Louis J. Halle makes some interesting points on the present scene in Germany; extended extracts from his article are reprinted below. Mr Halle was for many years associated with George Kennan and Dean Acheson in the US diplomatic service. He is now a member of the "Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes" in Geneva.

When we refer to "the present division of Germany" as unacceptable, what we mean is that the enactment of two separate German states violates a myth with which we have been brought up. It violates the script of a play with which we are familiar.

Today, in the Federal Republic of Germany, the myth of one Germany artificially cloven in two conflicts with certain practical considerations. A large part of the West German economic and political community, while paying more or less ardent lip-service to the cause of reunification, privately admits that if reunification were announced for tomorrow afternoon at three they would go into a panic. What would happen (they ask themselves) to their privates businesses and to the West German economy as a whole? What would happen to the balance of political forces? After almost a score of years in which the East Germans have been indoctrinated in left-wing authoritarianism, what would happen to the liberalism that the West Germans have been working to develop and establish? Soon there will be a new generation of East Germans that has grown apart from the generation of West Germans, a generation brought up on other myths, other traditions.

The question of what dire practical consequences might attend an imminent reunification is academic, however, since everyone recognises its impossibility. This is what enables many West Germans to wave the banner of reunification with untroubled enthusiasm. It is like embracing virtue nominally without having to change one's way of life. Reunification has become an eschatological objective, and no one in his senses ever worries about the practical problems that might follow.

Nevertheless, the movement for reunification has much to support it. The East Germans speak German (like the Austrians) and (unlike the Austrians) call themselves German; they have shared a common history with the West Germans; many of them have families in West Germany; and the geographical area in which they suffer is within hailing distance, so to speak, of their West German relatives. There is also the problem of Berlin, which can hardly have a solution satisfactory to the West as long as the present pattern of two Germanies persists. Consequently, those who would go into a panic if they learned that reunification was imminent are, at the same time, unable to accept the present situation as eternal.

What then?

We mislead ourselves when we think in terms of going back to the status quo ante bellum. It is true that, for those of us who grew up before the Second World War, the status quo ante bellum represents the norm. Anything else, it follows, seems against nature. There can be no peace or stability, we suppose, until "normalcy" is restored. Where we are dealing with myths, however, "normalcy" is relative: those who grow up with new myths, based on new situations, will conceive it differently than do those who grew up with the old myths based on the old situations. History keeps advancing beyond the old positions, so that the status quo ante can never be restored. I conclude that the pre-war Germany will never be restored.

It does not follow that the present situation will endure. On the contrary, the present situation seems to me too strained and too dependent on force for that.

What, then, may we realistically work for?

We may, I think, realistically work for a continuing series of small adjustments that are progressive, tending over the long run in one direction. The two Germanies already have entered into agreements regulating the very considerable commercial exchanges between them, and the fact that these agreements are unofficial has only a limited significance. There appears to be a set of tacit agreements, today, for policing both sides of the Berlin Wall in such a way as to prevent dangerous incidents. There are agreements, tacit or otherwise, on Western use of certain roads across East German territory to West Berlin, and although these agreements are officially between West Germany's allies and the Russians, unofficially they involve the West German authorities and the rulers of East Germany alike. Recently, certain additional perforations were made in the Berlin Wall to allow West Berliners to visit their relatives in East Berlin during the Christmas holidays, while East German Communist bands played Christmas music. A complex of relationships has been developing across the boundary of barbed-wire and cinder-block.

Relations between the two Germanies should develop as fast as the Cold War diminishes in its intensity. If we can look forward to a time when the Cold War has faded into the past, then we can surely look forward to a time when this development has gradually produced an intimate association between the two. Herr Walter Ulbricht, who now rules over the East Germans on behalf of Moscow, is not immortal. The day may come when the East Germans are enjoying a relatively free and prosperous life. They may then feel an unforced allegiance to an evolved East German state that has acquired respectability in their eyes and the sanction of custom — that has, in a word, acquired legitimacy. (After all, the way the good society generally comes about is by evolution of the bad). It will also, then, have acquired legitimacy for the West Germans and the rest of the world as well. Even though it still bore the antiquated label of "Communism", that would make no real difference. Communism, too, is a myth that can change. (Communist bands can play "O Little Town of Bethlehem").

When Germany was unified in 1871, the boundaries of Bavaria, Saxony and the other pre-existing German states did not disappear. They are there still, today. I do not foresee a time when the present boundary between East Germany and West Germany will disappear either. However, when both states have an equally accepted legitimacy, common interests will impel them to set up an institutional complex for the regulation of their association. Perhaps they will begin with joint committees ad hoc and end with a joint parliament. Just as there is, today, a "Greater London" that has gradually come to consist of a number of separate cities bound together in close association, we may look forward to the day when there is a "Greater Germany" embracing East and West; and perhaps, just as "Greater London" is part of a United Kingdom, so "Greater Germany" will be part of a United Europe.

This, it seems to me, represents the direction in which all concerned should strive ...

You Ask - We Answer (1)

RELIGION IN THE GDR

"We hear so many conflicting reports about the position of religion and the churches in the GDR. What are the facts?"

Mr. E.H., Manchester

Here is a summary of church developments in recent years and the present position of religious communities in the GDR:

There have been differences between Church and State at one time or another in most Christian countries, especially on the limits of temporal and spiritual authority, and it is not surprising that there has been considerable friction and misunderstanding in Germany, since it is a divided country one part of which, the GDR, has a purely secular government.

We shall deal mainly here with the Evangelical (Protestant) Church, because about 70 per cent of the GDR population are nominally Evangelical; there is a small Catholic community (about 10 per cent) and a number of small communities including Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists and Free Lutherans.

One of the main causes of friction in recent years arose from the fact that the Evangelical Church was still an all-German entity; the Church Synod was composed of churchmen from both GDR and West German churches. The Synod voted its approval in 1957 of a special agreement on religious pastoral guidance for the new West German Wehrmacht signed between the Evangelical Church and the West German Government; a number of GDR church functionaries also approved of this agreement, which laid down the conditions for appointing Army chaplains, setting up barracks churches and so on. GDR politicians and newspapers attacked the agreement, pointing out that by giving their consent to it East German churchmen had in fact sanctioned the reestablishment of the West German Wehrmacht under its erstwhile nazi generals.

When the decision was taken in 1958 to arm the West German Wehrmacht with nuclear weapons the position became acute and the Synod of the Evangelical Church had to face frankly the problem of whether it would continue to supply chaplains who would be expected to invoke God's blessing on atomic rockets.

A top-level conference between the GDR government and Evangelical Church leaders took place in East Berlin in July 1958 at which, after long discussion, the Church representatives agreed that this Military Chaplains' agreement was not valid for the Church in the GDR. The government on its part reaffirmed the liberty of faith and conscience which the GDR Constitution guarantees to all GDR citizens, and undertook to investigate other complaints made by Church representatives, especially in connection with religious instruction of children, which had also been a major cause of friction.

Disagreement centred around the "Jugendweihe", a form of secular confirmation which was originally introduced into Germany by Socialist free-thinkers nearly a century ago. Today courses leading up to "Jugendweihe" are held in all schools in the GDR.

When it became popular some years ago many Catholic and Protestant clergy objected to it because they felt that it conflicted with confirmation. They particularly objected to the materialist instruction on the universe and on the origin of life, and to the pledge taken at the end of the course. Some clergymen refused to admit to confirmation children who attended "Jugendweihe" courses; and on the other hand, many communists and other non-religious people felt that children who were confirmed should not be allowed to join in the secular initiation course.

After some years of more or less acrimonious controversy, the League of Evangelical Pastors in the GDR issued a statement in October 1958 that the pledge taken at the "Jugendweihe" ceremony was a promise to help build socialism, not an expression of faith in Marxism-Leninism; it need not therefore be regarded as anti-religious or contrary to the religious oath taken at confirmation. "Jugendweihe" is voluntary, and many practising Christian children now join in the course and take the pledge.

Looking back over the preceding five years, Dr Moritz Mitzenheim, Evangelical Bishop of Thuringia, wrote in July 1963 that the joint statement issued in July 1958 "contributed to normalising relations between Church and State in the GDR. It confirmed that every citizen has the right to freedom of faith and conscience and to practise his religion. The Church, which is independent of the State, is bound by nothing but Holy Writ and Confession and rejects any intrusion of worldly thought into its mission. The State gives it scope to serve the people..."

The problem of relations between Church and State was again dealt with at some length in the important GDR government statement issued in October 1960, when Walter Ulbricht, GDR State Council Chairman, reiterated that: "Members of the Evangelical Church, the Catholic Church and the Jewish community have every opportunity in the GDR to pursue their religious practices... We cannot close our eyes to the fact that the co-operation previously possible between the GDR government and the West German Evangelical Church has become impos-

GDR Constitution and Religion

Every citizen enjoys full freedom of conscience and religious belief. The unhindered exercise of religion is protected by the Republic.

The exercise of private or civil rights or the admission to public posts are independent of religious belief.

There is no established church. The freedom to form religious associations is guaranteed.

Every religious congregation is a self-governing body and orders and conducts its own affairs within the legal framework applying to all citizens.

Religious congregations are entitled to collect taxes from their members on the basis of the official tax lists and in conformity with the general provisions.

The question of participation in religious instruction is decided by the parents or legal guardians.

Parents or legal guardians decide on the membership of a child up to the age of fourteen in a religious association. From the age of fifteen the child itself decides its membership in a religious or philosophical association.

(From the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic, promulgated in October 1949)

sible because of the latter's close connection with militarism and NATO policy and its propaganda in support of the West German government's atom war policy... I am glad to be able to state that there is a growing measure of understanding of our attitude amongst a number of important Evangelical Church leaders in the GDR... There is no contradiction between Christianity and the humanist aims of socialism."

The fact remains, of course, that religion as such is not officially encouraged in the GDR. Dr Mitzenheim said in an interview with "The Times" on March 8th 1963 that: "Obviously there is a definite atmosphere which is not favourable to the Church. But is it not the same in the west? Is not the difference largely that in the GDR we have theoretical materialism, while in the west there is practical materialism?"

There will no doubt always be some measure of disagreement on purely religious grounds. Nevertheless, the churches publish large quantities of religious literature, including 27 theological and church newspapers and journals and many thousands of books in editions running into millions. The government provides millions of marks a year to help pay pastors' salaries and run church hospitals, pensioners' and children's homes and confessional nursery schools; the six theological faculties at the universities are entirely financed by government (there were 554 theological students in 1962—1963 and the figure remains constant at somewhat over 500 a year), assistance has been given in the restoration of historic church monuments and works of art and the government has taken over the entire expense of restoring a number of larger churches and cathedrals.

There is tremendous scope for cooperation in welfare work and the churches take full advantage of this, with the unqualified approval of the GDR government. There are, for example, 2,500 Evangelical Inner Mission and Catholic "Caritas" centres, 76 church-run hospitals, 228 pensioners' homes, 61 convalescent homes, hundreds of children's homes and a number of students' hostels and holiday homes for clergy and young Christians. Eighteen Evangelical and Catholic nurses' training schools provide the same courses as government training schools.

The Evangelical Church also runs a large number of purely religious or social service training centres, six Evangelical Academies and ten church music schools, and there are two very famous boys' choirs, the Dresden Kreuz Choir and the Thomanerchor in Leipzig. Church services are broadcast every Sunday by GDR radio and can be held on request in hospitals, prisons and other institutions.

A number of international church conferences have been held in the GDR and GDR church dignitaries attend many important conferences abroad.

There is no discrimination against practising Christians in every-day life. More than 15,000 Christians are members of elected bodies — from village councils to the People's Chamber — and in government departments, in the Ministries and in the State Council.

(For more details on present-day church activities see GDR, September 20 th 1963)

You Ask - We Answer (2)

THOSE OLD NAZI FILES

"In discussing the trials of nazi war criminals in West Germany, I keep running into the argument that 'the East' refuses to give the West German authorities old nazi files, and that this makes it difficult to get the necessary evidence. Can you clarify the situation?" **M. L., London**

The West German Government often makes great play with this argument. West German Minister of the Interior Hermann Hoecherl told the Bundestag on February 21st this year: "The Federal Government has made repeated efforts to obtain the documentary material held in the Communist area of domination. We have requested the eastern authorities to give this material to the Federal Republic, which can guarantee proper care and objective use. Unfortunately this request has hitherto not been complied with. Obviously this documentary material is being held back for political reasons."

There is in fact no record of "repeated" West German requests. Precisely once, in July 1962, the West German Government demanded brusquely that the socialist states of eastern Europe should hand over nazi files to the Federal Archives in Koblenz.

The socialist states, rather naturally, did not react. They are perfectly ready to allow properly authorised West German investigators to consult these files, but they have no confidence that they would be in good hands or be objectively used if they were transferred to West Germany. Much of the evidence used in recent West German war crimes trials has in fact come from such files, tons of which are held in Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries.

The situation is precisely the same in the German Democratic Republic. The legal authorities of the GDR have made at least ten offers to the competent West German authorities, offering use of the files. In two isolated cases, West German investigators have taken up the offer; in dozens of other cases state attorneys from the GDR have delivered photostats and microfilms of important and incriminating documents to their West German opposite numbers.

The West German authorities, far from taking full advantage of these facilities, have done everything to prevent their being used. In May this year, for instance, the West Berlin public prosecutor opened negotiations with the GDR for permission to inspect nazi files in the Central Archives in Potsdam in connection with a pending trial; the West German cabinet announced on May 13th that it opposed such a step. This opposition meant that the Bonn cabinet would rather see nazi criminals go free than allow any dealings with the "non-existent" GDR.

Summing up the situation: the GDR and the other socialist countries are ready and willing to help in the task of tracking down and convicting nazi murderers. They do not, however, intend to hand over these valuable files to the old nazis who hold key posts in West Germany, who might so easily "lose" or destroy them.

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Bundeswehr for Saigon?

A special commission of the West German Bundeswehr was established late in May to comb the West German forces for officers and men with jungle fighting experience, circles in close touch with the West German Defence Ministry reported.

The special commission was established after US Defence Minister Robert McNamara had visited Bonn on May 12th and pressed for West German aid in South Vietnam. West Germany publicly announced that it would give some help, but spokesmen declined to state whether direct military aid would be given.

American military circles were reported to have urged that West Germany was particularly fitted to give aid, especially in the form of "instructors and military advisers", since it disposed of a considerable reserve of trained military men who had first-hand experience of military operations in Vietnam. Many thousands of Germans, largely former SS men, served in the French Foreign Legion in Vietnam before the French were driven out of the country in 1954. Most of them returned to West Germany when demobilised from the Legion, and a large number immediately joined the Bundeswehr. Particularly amongst senior NCOs there are today many hundreds of veterans of the "dirty war" in Vietnam.

Most sectors of the West German press showed considerable reserve when it was suggested that West German military contingents should go to South Vietnam. Opposition was largely based upon the argument that the Americans had lost the war there in any case. In view of public reluctance, it was thought in Bonn that any large-scale overt military aid was unlikely in the near future; it would probably be confined to squads of "volunteers", on the lines of the "Condor Legion" which Hitler sent to Spain to fight for Franco.

Realism on Germany

By Arthur Krock

Senator Pell of Rhode Island, the Congressional pioneer in urging a realistic approach to the "German problem," has reverted to his theme ...

In a speech to the Senate Thursday Pell expounded a view, which has come to be widely shared in the Administration, concerning the establishment of stable relations between the split areas of pre-war Germany, and between Bonn and Moscow ... As the Rhode Island Senator expressed it:

"It does seem to me ... that a factual approach based on our acute national interests and on the realities and facts of the world today is not only consistent with caution: it is ... the very path of caution and wisdom ... our ultimate objective of a unified Germany in a stabilized and peaceful Europe can best be attained by reducing present causes of tension."

The opposite approach is to continue to associate the Administration with the constant propaganda line that no solution of the German problem can even be explored until and unless the East-West sections are unified on terms the propagandists know perfectly well the U.S.S.R. will never agree to ...

Then Senator Pell repeated as follows the "formula of realism" he has been urging for several years:

"... The West could best pursue our objectives in Germany and in Europe by securing an actual corridor of land access to Berlin, the lack of which has plagued us for 20 years ... In return for such a specified grant of a land corridor of access, I believe we could afford to accept the reality of the present borders and government of East Germany. At the same time we should encourage the formation of various all-German committees in the fields of communication, education and cultural exchange, such as already exist for trade and the Olympic games."

Then, with a hoped-for reduction of tension between East and West, the way is paved for the attainment of our objective of German unification.

In conclusion he drove home a point which, though the Administration has not made it so directly, is foremost in its thinking and in the resentful conciousness of many Americans outside the Government. In response to "the protesting voices ... that West Germany must not become a satellite of the United States," said Pell, "we have every right to turn the proposition around ... and insist that the United States shall not become a satellite of West Germany when it comes to determining our relations with the Soviet Union."

("New York Times", International Edition, May 16th 1964)

"Munich Still Valid" – W. German Minister

The Munich Agreement of 1938, under which Hitler occupied large parts of Czechoslovakia, is still valid today, Hans-Christoph Seebohm, West German Transport Minister, told a mass meeting at Nuremberg on May 18th.

The minister, who was speaking at a rally of "Sudeten Germans", resettled in West Germany from Czechoslovakia after the war, said:

"We demand the return of our Sudeten German homeland, of which we have been robbed. The Munich Agreement of 1938 is an international agreement, valid in international law. The Sudeten German areas are rightful German territory."

The Munich Agreement was signed by Hitler for Germany, Mussolini for Italy, Daladier for France and Neville Chamberlain for Britain as a result of Hitler's threats that he would go to war if he did not get what he wanted without war. It was denounced as null and void by the British Government on August 5th 1942.

The West German Government officially claims large areas of Poland and a portion of the Soviet Union as "German territory", but does not claim the "Sudeten" area of Czechoslovakia. It has made feeble attempts to dissociate itself from the claims to part of Czechoslovakia made by Seebohm and other ministers, but they have not been disciplined.

Students fom All Over

A total 4000 students and trainees from 98 different countries are now studying in the German Democratic Republic. The majority of the students come from the African and Asian countries. Many of the technicians are taking special courses in the running and care of factory equipment now being exported from the GDR to all parts of the world.

Prisoner Pardoned

The State Council of the GDR announced on May 23rd that it had pardoned Heinz Brandt, sentenced to 14 years imprisonment on charges of espionage in May 1962. Brandt was released on the same date.

Heinz Brandt, who held various posts of trust in the GDR after the war, fled to West Germany in 1958. In 1961 he was arrested on the territory of the GDR. At his trial before the GDR Supreme Court in 1962 evidence was given that he had worked for an espionage organisation in West Germany.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

There would appear to be no limit to the screwy things which western visitors see or think they see on visits to East Berlin. Over the past years I have pinned up a few of the choicest specimens in this column, but now along comes an American lawyer named James B. Donovan, and shows that the others weren't even trying.

Swapper Wopper

Donovan is the man who handled the Powers-Abel swap in Berlin in 1962, and he has now published a book on the subject, "Strangers on a Bridge" (Atheneum Publishers, New York). Most of the action in this allegedly factual book takes place in Berlin in February 1962. Now let me give you a quote, which I have had to translate from the German version, since I could not lay my hands on the original:

"Through the falling snow I went towards the Unter den Linden (in East Berlin). Suddenly, as I turned a corner, I was confronted by a group of ten or twelve young men, in shabby trenchcoats or heavy pullovers, without hats. Cigarettes hung from the corners of the mouths of some of them. They stood there like a pack of wolves. I straightened up. With the stern expression of an East German or Soviet official, who needs no weapon but his briefcase, I passed through the group. It was a long minute.

"Later I learned that such gangs of neglected young people roamed the streets of East Berlin by day and by night. They lived from the refuse bins of the city."

Marrow Freezer

It is a pretty good story, and will obviously freeze the marrow in the bones of the solid citizens of the Middle West. The only fault is that it is utterly untrue. I have been living for fourteen years now right in the centre of East Berlin, and have not only never seen such a gang, but have never even heard a rumour that such a gang exists. What is perhaps even more remarkable is that the West Berlin and West German newspapers, always avid for sensational stories about "the East", have never reported on these gangs either.

Looking at Mr Donovan's story more closely, I think we can break it down into two parts. We can perhaps accept his story that he met a rather rough-looking group of young men on the street; as he says, it was snowing, and they were probably a snow-clearing team, who naturally do not dress up in their Sunday best for the job. The rest of Mr Donovan's first paragraph is the result of his own fertile imagination, fed by many years of scare reporting and films with juicy titles like "I was a Teenager Mugger Behind the Iron Curtain".

Intelligence?

But the second paragraph must be taken a little more seriously. "Later I learned", says Mr Donovan, giving his explanation. Whom did he learn from? According to his own book, the only people he was in contact with in West Berlin were US intelligence agents. He had obviously retailed his story about meeting the "gang" to one of these men, and been fed the weird story about waifs and strays feeding from the refuse bins. Since he himself was in Berlin in a semi-intelligence capacity, the US agents had no reason to try to mislead him; and this leads us to the conclusion that US intelligence officers in West Berlin in February 1962 really believed this story. This in its turn means logically that their reports to Washington would be on the same infantile level. And that is more serious than a cock-and-bull story told by a scarey tourist.

Questionnaire

Earlier this year we circularised readers in Britain, asking them what they thought of GERMAN REPORT, what subjects they would like to see dealt with more fully, and so on.

The cards we sent out soon came flooding back, and for several weeks the postman who clumps his way up to our third floor office complained at the weight of his daily sack. Now we are finally emerging from the piles of cards, and have found the time to tabulate some of the results.

My thanks to all those who took the trouble of replying; and I am glad to be able to report that the vast majority seem to be pretty satisfied with the paper as it is today. Most popular subject was "Everyday life in the German Democratic Republic", and we shall do our best to satisfy readers on this score. News of neo-nazis and militarists in West Germany ran a good second, and only just over one percent of readers thought that we were devoting too much space to the subject. Social services, educations, arts, and the position of women also received a very good vote.

There was a space left on the form for readers to fill in subjects which they would like to see dealt with, and we are noting all of these suggestions. Some of them turned up only once amongst the thousands of replies, like Esperanto, badges of rank in the GDR armed forces, and angling; but others turned up quite often and we shall try to meet these requests for more information on trade unions, the cooperative movement, prices and living standards, housing, and religion.

History?

Other requests fell a little outside our scope, I feel. Several readers, for instance, wanted to know more about German history, and one optimist hoped that GERMAN REPORT would provide him with a concise course in Marxism-Leninism and dialectical materialism. There is no room for that, but I am still in two minds about the request for some history. Perhaps those interested could let me know in rather more detail what period of German history they are particularly interested in, and I shall see whether anything can be done.

Speaking With Tongues

On another page of this issue we report on the "All-German discussions" which raged over Whitsun in Berlin between East and West Germans. I must admit that listening to the arguments, which sometimes went whizzing past each other because of different conceptions and different terminology which have grown up in the two German states, I was often reminded of the origin of Whitsun, as described in the New Testament. As you may have forgotten, the story went like this:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come... there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues."

There was no fire from the heavens in East Berlin at Whitsun, but there was a very fine firework display to wind up the proceedings.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Krausenstrasse 9, Berlin W 8, Telephone 23 29 68. Printed in Germany by (204). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.

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